

UH-72A Light Utility Helicopter

What is it?

The UH-72A Lakota is the Army's new light utility helicopter that provides operational capability for focused logistics and full dimensional protection as related to Homeland Security (HLS) and support operations in permissive environments. The Lakota configuration includes an unobstructed cabin/cargo flat floor with six removable energy-absorbing seats. It is capable of functioning in the passenger, cargo or Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) configurations. This aircraft will conduct Army Aviation light utility helicopter missions in support of required Army tasks and will replace the retiring UH-1H Huey and OH-58A/C Kiowa helicopters. The UH-72A is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certified, Commercial off the Shelf (COTS), Non-developmental item (NDI) that is operated and maintained in accordance with FAA regulation and Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) procedures. The platform has a 1,107 lbs. payload capability in "High/Hot" conditions and can hover out of ground effect (HOGE) with a gross weight of up to 7,760 pounds. The Lakota has low noise rotor blades, twin engine reliability and can reach speeds up to 145 knots with up to 3.2 hours of endurance. Additionally, the platform combines a Night Vision Device (NVD) compatible fully functional glass cockpit with a wide field of view, Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) with a three axis autopilot and is equipped with a sophisticated communication and navigational package that offers complete interagency communications, Global Positioning System (GPS) and complete Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations.

What has Army Aviation Done?

To date, the Army has fielded more than 85 aircraft and will field approximately 119 aircraft by the end of FY10 to both Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) units. All aircraft modifications conducted for the UH-72A must be conducted following FAA regulations via a Type Certificate or Supplemental Type Certificate. Modifications also drive changes in the Contract Logistics Support (CLS) rates and must be approved via an Operational Needs Statement (ONS) at the Department of the Army level. Currently New Equipment Training (NET) for rated aviators, instructor pilots and maintainers are being trained by the OEM (American Eurocopter) at Grand Prairie, Texas. However, UH-72A institutional training is being established at the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (EAATS) in Indiantown Gap, Pa., and expected to be fully functional for conducting aircraft qualification training, instructor pilot training and maintainer training not later than 2012.

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?

The Army plans to procure and field 345 UH-72A aircraft through 2018. The UH-72A program will continue towards improving the Mission Equipment Packages for Security and Support (S&S) Battalions, MEDEVAC, VIP transport, and training center aircraft. Highlighted challenges for this effort are the integration of the ARC-231 radios and Blue Force Tracker for selected aircraft.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?

The UH-72A provides enhanced mission effectiveness and flexibility with a fully modernized and versatile aircraft. The UH-72A replaces the legacy fleet of the UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft of which the operating and support cost have become expensive and unaffordable. The Commercial-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) and non-developmental aspects of

the UH-72A provides a more affordable solution by substantially reducing the Operating and Support (O&S) costs of the airframe. Because of its light utility capability it also frees up the UH-60 to accomplish the heavier logistical requirements.

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